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## Those Non-Secret Wars

The recent disclosure that the Central Intelligence Agency spent well over \$100 million last year as part of a growing U.S. effort to halt North Vietnamese advances in Laos was part of a hitherto secret report on what is probably the most publicized of this nation's non-secret "secret" involvements.

The correctness of U.S. involvement aside, for the moment, the continuing involvement of the CIA in these foreign adventures will continue to be an embarrassment for this government in general and the CIA in particular. There is something bordering on the inane for the U.S. to continually involve a supposedly highly confidential, information gathering and evaluating agency in what are simply military efforts to preserve governments whose continued existence has been held to be to the U.S.' best interests.

There was a time, and in the not too distant past, when such preservation jobs were accompanied by cries of "send the Marines." It might not be a bad idea to

fall back on. It was considerably more honest because at least it let the world know the U.S. wanted to "do business" with the current regime. Now the practice of "sending the CIA" places Uncle Sam in the role of the thief in the night. Previously there was at least some miniscule validity to the implication that Uncle Sam was a knight in shining armor.

The Marines might not have a corner on the role, but it is a good starting place. Also the Army's Special Forces, originally organized to provide the manpower for active military assistant roles, might be realigned to their original task, instead of being a CIA-usurped action arm.

But whatever branch of the armed forces gets the job, having the military do the job of supervising U.S. support of friendly, but under attack, governments would be better than the ludicrous spectacle of CIA agents, posing as agricultural experts, flitting through the jungle undergrowth supervising indigenous soldiers as they off-load from a U.S.-supplied helicopter. There is something considerably more honest in having a soldier or marine in uniform do the job, than having a placid agronomist suddenly transformed into a sharpshooting expert on helicopter warfare.

What is even more to the advantage of the U.S. is not facing the contingency of having its "secret wars" continually exposed by antagonists either at home or abroad to the further embarrassment of America.